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NEWS RELEASE

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Where's the Beef?
by Senator Larry Craig

Back in the 1980s, the Wendy's restaurant chain had a very successful commercial campaign, in which an elderly woman ordered hamburgers from various fast-food restaurants. Time and time again, she was disappointed, and repeatedly asked, "Where's the beef?" Despite the promises of some restaurants, the woman often found that their burgers contained little substance.

Sadly, nearly eight months into the 110th Congress, Democrat leadership leaves a lot of us asking, "Where's the beef?"

After roughly 200 days in charge, the Democrat majority had passed about 20 bills naming or renaming post offices, federal buildings and parks, and one bill regulating operation of the Senate Gift Shop. Shortly before the start of the August in-state work period, they succeeded in passing a few bills, including an ethics "reform" bill that was forced through the Senate without allowing any significant Republican input.

Since the Democrat majority has such a sparse record of legislative accomplishments, I'm left with little else to discuss but what they haven't done.

The tax relief measures approved by Congress and signed by President Bush in 2001 and 2003 have clearly proven to be valuable motivators spurring the economy upward. Since 2003, 8.3 million jobs have been created in the United States, and real wages have risen 1.3 percent over the last 12 months.

Unfortunately, many provisions of those tax cuts are set to expire in the coming years. Despite the success of these tax cuts in creating economic growth, the majority party in Congress has shown little interest in extending the cuts or allowing American families to keep more of what they earn. Never forget – failing to extend a tax cut is just the same as raising your taxes.

Another aspect of fiscal responsibility is controlling spending. Although they promised voters in 2006 that they would restore fiscal responsibility to Capitol Hill, the Democrats' first budget resolution increased spending by \$205 billion over the next five years.

The ethics reform bill approved by the Senate will likely make the appropriations process less – not more – transparent. The energy bill approved by the Senate in June contains little in the way of

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incentives for the production of alternative energy sources. Instead of working with Republicans to craft legislation that has broad, bipartisan support, they’ve spent months doing things like holding divisive debates on Iraq policy, even going so far as to hold an all-night debate recently, which even some Democrats admitted was a publicity stunt.

Having said all that, there have been occasional signs that we can work together to move legislation important to the American people. Republicans and Democrats were able to put together a compromise proposal on the minimum wage that contained small-business tax breaks to counter potential negative impacts on entry-level jobs; it passed and just recently went into effect. Just before leaving Washington for the August break, Congress approved a bill drafted by Republicans with the Director of National Intelligence to close a gap in the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act and make sure our country receives the information we need on foreign terrorists.

I hope that lesson sinks in. When Democrats include Republicans in the legislative process, much can be achieved. Unfortunately, they haven’t often been willing to do so this year. And that’s left a lot of people wondering, “Where’s the beef?”